



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Request for Proposal #: 10-RFP-2053641198-YB

Media Distribution Services – NC State Fair 2026 & 2027

Date of Issue: March 12, 2026

Proposal Opening Date: April 08, 2026

At 02:00 PM ET

Direct all inquiries concerning this RFP to:

Yasser Babiker

Procurement Specialist II

Email: yasser.babiker@ncagr.gov



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

Request for Proposal

10-RFP-2053641198-YB

For internal State agency processing, including tabulation of proposals, provide your company's eVP (Electronic Vendor Portal) Number. Pursuant to G.S. 132-1.10(b) this identification number shall not be released to the public. **This page will be removed and shredded, or otherwise kept confidential**, before the procurement file is made available for public inspection.

**This page shall be filled out and returned with your proposal.
Failure to do so may subject your proposal to rejection.**

Vendor Name

Vendor eVP#

Note: For a contract to be awarded to you, your company (you) must be a North Carolina registered Vendor in good standing. You must enter the Vendor number assigned through eVP (Electronic Vendor Portal). If you do not have a Vendor number, register at

<https://evp.nc.gov/SignIn>

| STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA <i>Division of Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services</i> | |
|---|--|
| Refer <u>ALL</u> Inquiries regarding this RFP to the Procurement Lead through the Message Board in the Sourcing Tool. See section 2.5 for details: | Request for Proposal #: 10-RFP-2053641198-YB Proposals will be publicly opened: April 08, 2026 At 02:00 PM ET |
| | <hr/> Microsoft Teams meeting Join: https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/23636074806102?p=E9AsQtSiFz1A4GnGWX Meeting ID: 236 360 748 061 02 Passcode: TP6ph2hg |
| | <hr/> Need help? System reference Dial in by phone +1 984-204-1487,,743778112# United States, Raleigh Find a local number Phone conference ID: 743 778 112# Join on a video conferencing device Tenant key: ncgov@m.webex.com Video ID: 119 652 642 1 More info For organizers: Meeting options Reset dial-in PIN |
| Using Agency: Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services – NC State Fair Requisition No.: RQ261738 | Commodity No. and Description: 821018 - Advertising agency services |

EXECUTION

In compliance with this Request for Proposals (RFP), and subject to all the conditions herein, the undersigned Vendor offers and agrees to furnish and deliver any or all items upon which prices are bid, at the prices set opposite each item within the time specified herein.

By executing this proposal, the undersigned Vendor understands that false certification is a Class I felony and certifies that:

- this proposal is submitted competitively and without collusion (G.S. 143-54),
- none of its officers, directors, or owners of an unincorporated business entity has been convicted of any violations of Chapter 78A of the General Statutes, the Securities Act of 1933, or the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (G.S. 143-59.2), and
- it is not an ineligible Vendor as set forth in G.S. 143-59.1.

Furthermore, by executing this proposal, the undersigned certifies to the best of Vendor’s knowledge and belief, that:

- it and its principals are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any Federal or State department or agency.

As required by G.S. 143-48.5, the undersigned Vendor certifies that it, and each of its sub-Contractors for any Contract awarded as a result of this RFP, complies with the requirements of Article 2 of Chapter 64 of the NC General Statutes, including the requirement for each employer with more than 25 employees in North Carolina to verify the work authorization of its employees through the federal E-Verify system.

Proposal Number: 10-RFP-2053641198-YB

Vendor: _____

As required by Executive Order 24 (2017), the undersigned Vendor certifies will comply with all Federal and State requirements concerning fair employment and that it does not and will not discriminate, harass, or retaliate against any employee in connection with performance of any Contract arising from this solicitation.

G.S. 133-32 and Executive Order 24 (2009) prohibit the offer to, or acceptance by, any State Employee associated with the preparing plans, specifications, estimates for public contracts; or awarding or administering public contracts; or inspecting or supervising delivery of the public contract of any gift from anyone with a contract with the State, or from any person seeking to do business with the State. By execution of this response to the RFP, the undersigned certifies, for Vendor’s entire organization and its employees or agents, that Vendor is not aware that any such gift has been offered, accepted, or promised by any employees of your organization.

By executing this bid, Vendor certifies that it has read and agreed to the **INSTRUCTION TO VENDORS** and the **NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS incorporated herein**. These documents can be accessed from the Ariba Sourcing Tool.

Failure to execute/sign proposal prior to submittal may render proposal invalid and it MAY BE REJECTED. Late proposals shall not be accepted.

| | | |
|---|-------------------|--------------------|
| COMPLETE/FORMAL NAME OF VENDOR: | | |
| STREET ADDRESS: | P.O. BOX: | ZIP: |
| CITY & STATE & ZIP: | TELEPHONE NUMBER: | TOLL FREE TEL. NO: |
| PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS ADDRESS IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE (SEE INSTRUCTIONS TO VENDORS ITEM #21): | | |
| PRINT NAME & TITLE OF PERSON SIGNING ON BEHALF OF VENDOR: | | |
| VENDOR’S AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE*: | DATE: | EMAIL: |

VALIDITY PERIOD

Offer shall be valid for at least One Hundred and Twenty (120) days from date of bid opening, unless otherwise stated here: _____ days, or if extended by mutual agreement of the parties in writing. Any withdrawal of this offer shall be made in writing, effective upon receipt by the agency issuing this RFP.

ACCEPTANCE OF PROPOSAL

If your proposal is accepted, all provisions of this RFP, along with the written results of any negotiations, shall constitute the written agreement between the parties (“Contract”). The NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS are incorporated herein and shall apply. Depending upon the Goods or Services being offered, other terms and conditions may apply, as mutually agreed.

| |
|---|
| <p>FOR STATE USE ONLY: Offer accepted and Contract awarded this _____ day of _____, 20____, as indicated on</p> <p>The attached certification, by _____.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Authorized Representative of NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services)</p> |
|---|

Contents

- 1.0 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND 5**
- 1.1 CONTRACT TERM..... 5**
- 2.0 GENERAL INFORMATION 5**
- 2.1 REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL DOCUMENT 5**
- 2.2 E-PROCUREMENT FEE 5**
- 2.3 NOTICE TO VENDORS REGARDING RFP TERMS AND CONDITIONS 6**
- 2.4 RFP SCHEDULE..... 6**
- 2.5 PROPOSAL QUESTIONS 6**
- 2.6 PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL 7**
- 2.7 PROPOSAL CONTENTS..... 7**
- 2.8 ALTERNATE PROPOSALS..... 8**
- 2.9 DEFINITIONS, ACRONYMS, AND ABBREVIATIONS 8**
- 3.0 METHOD OF AWARD AND PROPOSAL EVALUATION PROCESS 8**
- 3.1 METHOD OF AWARD 8**
- 3.2 CONFIDENTIALITY AND PROHIBITED COMMUNICATIONS DURING EVALUATION 8**
- 3.3 PROPOSAL EVALUATION PROCESS 9**
- 3.4 EVALUATION CRITERIA 9**
- 3.5 PERFORMANCE OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES 10**
- 3.6 INTERPRETATION OF TERMS AND PHRASES..... 10**
- 4.0 REQUIREMENTS 10**
- 4.1 PRICING..... 10**
- 4.2 FINANCIAL STABILITY 11**
- 4.3 HUB PARTICIPATION 11**
- 4.4 VENDOR EXPERIENCE..... 11**
- 4.5 REFERENCES 11**
- 4.6 PERSONNEL Error! Bookmark not defined.**
- 4.7 VENDOR’S REPRESENTATIONS 11**
- 4.8 SUBCONTRACTORS 12**
- 4.9 SECRETRY OF STATE REGISTRATION 12**
- 5.0 SPECIFICATIONS AND SCOPE OF WORK..... 12**
- 5.1 GENERAL 12**
- 5.2 TASKS/DELIVERABLES 13**

| | | |
|------------|--|-----------|
| 5.3 | PROJECT ORGANIZATION | 14 |
| 5.4 | TECHNICAL APPROACH | 14 |
| 5.5 | CERTIFICATION AND SAFETY LABELS..... | 14 |
| 6.0 | CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION | 15 |
| 6.1 | CONTRACT MANAGER AND CUSTOMER SERVICE | 15 |
| 6.2 | INVOICES..... | 15 |
| 6.3 | CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT | 15 |
| 6.4 | ACCEPTANCE OF WORK | 15 |
| 6.5 | DISPUTE RESOLUTION..... | 16 |
| 6.6 | CONTRACT CHANGES | 16 |
| 6.7 | ATTACHMENTS | 16 |
| 7.0 | ATTACHMENT A: PRICING FORM | 17 |

1.0 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDACS), NC State Fair (NCSF) Division, is seeking proposals from qualified advertising agencies to develop a comprehensive media program for the 2026 N.C. State Fair.

The scope of services includes Development of an advertising plan, Placement of advertisements in media (television, radio, print, digital and out of home), Distribution of advertisements to media companies.

The annual N.C. State Fair occurs in October and is one of the largest 11-day fairs in North America. It draws more than 950,000 patrons annually. The Fair boasts a variety of entertainment for all ages including Innovative food, Carnival rides, Agriculture and livestock exhibits and competitions, Horse shows, Free grounds entertainment, Crafts, History and other special exhibits.

Media placement for the 2025 N.C. State Fair was distributed as follows:

- Digital: 74%
- Traditional: 23%
- Experiential: 3%

Proposals shall be submitted in accordance with the terms and conditions of this RFP and any addenda issued hereto.

The State intends to award an agency specific contract in a total amount of \$445,000.00.

The intent of this solicitation is to award an Agency Specific Contract.

1.1 CONTRACT TERM

The Contract shall have an initial term of One (1) year, beginning on the date of final Contract execution (the “Effective Date”). The Vendor shall begin work under the Contract within Fifteen (15) business days of the Effective Date.

At the end of the Contract’s initial term, the State shall have the option, in its sole discretion, to renew the Contract on the same terms and conditions for up to One (1) additional one-year terms. The State will give the Vendor written notice of its intent to exercise each option no later than Sixty (60) days before the end of the Contract’s then-current term. In addition to any optional renewal terms, and with the Vendor’s concurrence, the State reserves the right to extend the Contract after the last active term.

Proposals shall be submitted in accordance with the terms and conditions of this RFP and any addenda issued hereto.

N.C. State Fair dates for the two (2) year period are as follows:

October 15-25, 2026 October 14-24, 2027

2.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL DOCUMENT

This RFP is comprised of the base RFP document, any attachments, and any addenda released before Contract award, which are incorporated herein by reference.

2.2 E-PROCUREMENT FEE

ATTENTION: This is an NC eProcurement solicitation facilitated by the Ariba Network. The E-Procurement fee may apply to this solicitation. See the paragraph entitled ELECTRONIC PROCUREMENT of the North Carolina General Terms and Conditions.

General information on the E-Procurement Services can be found at: <http://eprocurement.nc.gov/>.

What is the Ariba Network?

The Ariba Network is a web-based platform that serves as a connection point for buyers and Vendors. Vendors can log in to the Ariba Network to view purchase orders, respond to electronic requests for quotes, participate in Sourcing Events, and collaborate with buyers on contract documents.

For training on how to use the Sourcing Tool to view solicitations, submit questions, develop responses, upload documents, and submit offers to the State, Vendors should go to the following site:

2.3 NOTICE TO VENDORS REGARDING RFP TERMS AND CONDITIONS

It shall be the Vendor’s responsibility to read the Instructions to Vendors, the North Carolina General Terms and Conditions, all relevant exhibits and attachments, and any other components made a part of this RFP and comply with all requirements and specifications herein. Vendors are also responsible for obtaining and complying with all Addenda and other changes that may be issued in connection with this RFP.

If Vendors have questions, issues, regarding any component of this RFP, those must be submitted as questions in accordance with the instructions in the PROPOSAL QUESTIONS Section. If the State determines that any changes will be made as a result of the questions asked, then such decisions will be communicated in the form of an RFP addendum. The State may also elect to leave open the possibility for later negotiation of specific provisions of the Contract that have been addressed during the question-and-answer period, prior to contract award.

Other than through the process of negotiation under 01 NCAC 05B.0503, the State rejects and will not be required to evaluate or consider any additional or modified terms and conditions submitted with Vendor’s proposal or otherwise. This applies to any language appearing in or attached to the document as part of the Vendor’s proposal that purports to vary any terms and conditions or Vendors’ instructions herein or to render the proposal non-binding or subject to further negotiation. Vendor’s proposal shall constitute a firm offer that shall be held open for the period required herein (“Validity Period” above).

The State may exercise in its discretion to consider Vendor proposed modifications. By execution and delivery of this RFP Response, the Vendor agrees that any additional or modified terms and conditions, whether submitted purposely or inadvertently, shall have no force or effect, and will be disregarded unless expressly agreed upon through negotiations and incorporated by way of a Best and Final Offer (BAFO). Noncompliance with, or any attempt to alter or delete, this paragraph shall constitute sufficient grounds to reject Vendor’s proposal as nonresponsive.

2.4 RFP SCHEDULE

The table below shows the *intended* schedule for this RFP. The State will make every effort to adhere to this schedule.

| Event | Responsibility | Date and Time |
|-------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| Issue RFP | State | 03/12/2026 |
| Submit Written Questions | Vendor | 03/27/2026 by 12:00 PM |
| Provide Response to Questions | State | 04/01/2026 |
| Submit Proposals | Vendor | 04/08/2026 by 02:00 PM ET |
| Contract Award | State | TBD |

2.5 PROPOSAL QUESTIONS

Upon review of the RFP documents, Vendors may have questions to clarify or interpret the RFP in order to submit the best proposal possible. To accommodate the Proposal Questions process, Vendors shall submit any such questions by the “Submit Written Questions” date and time provided in the RFP SCHEDULE Section above, unless modified by Addendum.

Questions related to the content of the solicitation, or the procurement process should be directed to the person on the title page of this document via the Sourcing Tool's message board by the date and time specified in the RFP SCHEDULE Section of this RFP. Vendors will enter “RFP # 10-RFP-2053641198-YB – Questions” as the subject of the message. Question submittals should include a reference to the applicable RFP section. This is the only manner in which questions will be received.

Questions or issues related to using the Sourcing Tool itself can be directed to the North Carolina eProcurement Help Desk at 888-211-7440, Option 2. Help Desk representatives are available Monday through Friday from 7:30 AM ET to 5:00 PM ET.

Questions received prior to the submission deadline date, the State’s response, and any additional terms deemed necessary by the State will be posted in the Sourcing Tool in the form of an addendum and shall become an Addendum to this RFP. No information, instruction or advice provided orally or informally by any State personnel, whether made in response to a question

or otherwise in connection with this RFP, shall be considered authoritative or binding. Vendors shall rely *only* on written material contained in the RFP and an addendum to this RFP.

2.6 PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL

IMPORTANT NOTE: This is an absolute requirement. Late bids, regardless of cause, will not be opened or considered, and will be automatically disqualified from further consideration. Vendor shall bear the sole risk of late submission due to unintended or unanticipated delay. It is the Vendor's sole responsibility to ensure its proposal has been received as described in this RFP by the specified time and date of opening. Failure to submit a proposal in strict accordance with instructions provided shall constitute sufficient cause to reject a Vendor's proposal(s). Solicitation responses are subject to Sealed Bidding requirements.

Vendor's proposals for this procurement must be submitted through the Sourcing Tool. For training on how to use the Sourcing Tool to view solicitations, submit questions, develop responses, upload documents, and submit offers to the State, Vendors should go to the following site: <https://eprourement.nc.gov/training/vendor-training>

Questions or issues related to using the Sourcing Tool itself can be directed to the North Carolina eProcurement Help Desk at 888-211-7440, Option 2. Help Desk representatives are available Monday through Friday from 7:30 AM EST to 5:00 PM EST.

Tips for Using the Sourcing Tool

1. Vendors should review available training and confirm that they are able to access the Sourcing Event, enter responses, and upload files well in advance of the date and time response are due to allow sufficient time to seek assistance from the North Carolina eProcurement Help Desk.
2. Vendors may submit their responses early to make sure there are no issues, and then submit a revised response any time prior to the response due date and time. The State will only review the most recent response.
3. Vendors should respond to all relevant sections of the Sourcing Event. Certain questions or items are required in order to submit a response and are denoted with an asterisk. The Sourcing Tool will not allow a response to be submitted unless all required items are completed. The Sourcing Tool will provide error messages to help identify any required information that is missing when response is submitted.
4. Simply saving your response in the Sourcing Tool is not the same as submitting your response to the State. Vendors should make sure they complete the submission process and receive a message that their response was successfully submitted.
5. **Only Proposals submitted through the Content Section of the Ariba Sourcing Event will be considered. Proposals submitted through the Message Board will not be accepted or considered for award.**

If confidential and proprietary information is included in the proposal, also submit one (1) signed, REDACTED copy of the proposal. Such information may include trade secrets defined by N.C. Gen. Stat. § 66-152 and other information exempted from the Public Records Act pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. §132- 1.2. Vendor may designate information, Products, Services or appropriate portions of its response as confidential, consistent with and to the extent permitted under the statutes and rules set forth above. By so redacting any page, or portion of a page, the Vendor warrants that it has formed a good faith opinion, having received such necessary or proper review by counsel and other knowledgeable advisors, that the portions determined to be confidential and proprietary and redacted as such, meet the requirements of the Rules and Statutes set forth above. However, under no circumstances shall price information be designated as confidential.

If the Vendor does not provide a redacted version of the proposal with its proposal submission, the Department may release an unredacted version if a record request is received.

2.7 PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Vendors shall provide responses to all questions and complete all attachments for this RFP that require the Vendor to provide information and upload them to the Sourcing Event in the Sourcing Tool. Vendor may not be able to submit its response in the Sourcing Tool unless all required items are addressed. Vendors shall provide authorized signatures where requested. Failure to provide all required items, or Vendor's submission of incomplete items, may result in the State rejecting Vendor's proposal, in the State's sole discretion.

Vendor shall include the following items and attachments in the Sourcing Tool:

- a) Completed and signed version of all EXECUTION PAGES, along with the body of the RFP.
- b) Signed receipt pages of any addenda released in conjunction with this RFP, if required to be returned.
- c) Vendor’s Proposal addressing all Specifications of this RFP.
- d) Completed version of ATTACHMENT A: PRICING
- e) Completed and signed version of ATTACHMENT D: HUB SUPPLEMENTAL VENDOR INFORMATION
- f) Completed and signed version of ATTACHMENT E: CUSTOMER REFERENCE FORM
- g) Completed and signed version of ATTACHMENT F: LOCATION OF WORKERS UTILIZED BY VENDOR
- h) Completed and signed version of ATTACHMENT G: CERTIFICATION OF FINANCIAL CONDITION

2.8 ALTERNATE PROPOSALS

Unless provided otherwise in this RFP, Vendor may submit alternate proposals for comparable Goods, various methods or levels of Service(s), or that propose different options. Alternate proposals must specifically identify the RFP requirements and advantage(s) addressed by the alternate proposal. Each proposal must be for a specific set of Goods and Services and must include specific pricing. Each proposal must be complete and independent of other proposals offered. If a Vendor chooses to respond with various offerings, Vendor shall follow the specific instructions for uploading Alternate Proposals in the Sourcing Tool.

2.9 DEFINITIONS, ACRONYMS, AND ABBREVIATIONS

Relevant definitions for this RFP are provided in 01 NCAC 05A .0112 and in the Instructions to Vendors found in the Sourcing Tool, which are incorporated herein by this reference.

3.0 METHOD OF AWARD AND PROPOSAL EVALUATION PROCESS

3.1 METHOD OF AWARD

North Carolina G.S. 143-52 provides a general list of criteria the State shall use to award contracts, as supplemented by the additional criteria herein. The Goods or Services being procured shall dictate the application and order of criteria; however, all award decisions shall be in the State’s best interest. All qualified proposals will be evaluated, and awards will be made to the Vendor(s) meeting the specific RFP Specifications and achieving the highest and best final evaluation, based on the criteria described below.

While the intent of this RFP is to award a Contract(s) to a single Vendor, the State reserves the right to make separate awards to different Vendors for one or more line-items, to not award one or more line-items or to cancel this RFP in its entirety without awarding a Contract, if it is considered to be most advantageous to the State to do so.

The State reserves the right to waive any minor informality or technicality in proposals received.

3.2 CONFIDENTIALITY AND PROHIBITED COMMUNICATIONS DURING EVALUATION

While this RFP is under evaluation, the responding Vendor, including any subcontractors and suppliers, is prohibited from engaging in conversations intended to influence the outcome of the evaluation. See Paragraph 29 of the Instructions to Vendors entitled COMMUNICATIONS BY VENDORS.

Each Vendor submitting a proposal to this RFP, including its employees, agents, subcontractors, suppliers, subsidiaries and affiliates, is prohibited from having any communications with any person inside or outside the using agency; issuing agency; other government agency office or body (including the procurement lead named above, any department secretary, agency head, members of the General Assembly and Governor’s office); or private entity, if the communication refers to the content of Vendor’s proposal or qualifications, the content of another Vendor’s proposal, another Vendor’s qualifications or ability to perform a resulting contract, and/or the transmittal of any other communication of information that could be reasonably considered to have the effect of directly or indirectly influencing the evaluation of proposals, the award of a contract, or both.

Any Vendor not in compliance with this provision shall be disqualified from evaluation and award. A Vendor’s proposal may be disqualified if its subcontractor and/or supplier engage in any of the foregoing communications during the time that the procurement is active (*i.e.*, the issuance date of the procurement until the date of contract award or cancellation of the procurement). Only those discussions, communications or transmittals of information authorized or initiated by the issuing agency for this RFP or inquiries directed to the procurement lead named in this RFP regarding requirements of the RFP (prior to proposal submission) or the status of the award (after submission) are excepted from this provision.

3.3 PROPOSAL EVALUATION PROCESS

Only responsive submissions will be evaluated.

The State will conduct a One-Step evaluation of Proposals:

Proposals will be received according to the method stated in the Proposal Submittal Section above.

All proposals must be received by the issuing agency not later than the date and time specified in the RFP SCHEDULE Section above, unless modified by Addendum. Vendors are cautioned that this is a request for offers, not an offer or request to contract, and the State reserves the unqualified right to reject any and all offers at any time if such rejection is deemed to be in the best interest of the State.

At the date and time provided in the RFP SCHEDULE Section above, unless modified by Addendum, the proposal from each responding Vendor will be opened publicly and all offers (except those that have been previously withdrawn, or voided bids) will be tabulated. The tabulation shall be made public at the time it is created. When negotiations after receipt of bids are authorized pursuant to G.S. 143-49 and 01 NCAC 05B.0503, only the names of offerors and the Goods and Services offered shall be tabulated at the time of opening. If negotiation is anticipated, cost and price shall become available for public inspection at the time of the award. Interested parties are cautioned that these costs and their components are subject to further evaluation for completeness and correctness and therefore may not be an exact indicator of a Vendor’s pricing position.

At their option, the evaluators may request oral presentations or discussions with any or all Vendors for clarification or to amplify the materials presented in any part of the proposal. Vendors are cautioned, however, that the evaluators are not required to request presentations or other clarification—and often do not. Therefore, all proposals should be complete and reflect the most favorable terms available from the Vendor.

3.4 EVALUATION CRITERIA

In addition to the general criteria in G.S. 143-52 which may or may not be relevant to this RFP, all qualified proposals will be evaluated, and award made based on considering the following criteria, to result in an award most advantageous to the State:

BEST VALUE: "Best Value" procurement methods are authorized by N.C.G.S. §§143-135.9 and 143B-1350(h). The award decision is made based on multiple factors, including: total cost of ownership, meaning the cost of acquiring, operating, maintaining, and supporting a product or service over its projected lifetime; the evaluated technical merit of the Vendor's offer; the Vendor's past performance; and the evaluated probability of performing the specifications stated in the solicitation on time, with high quality, and in a manner that accomplishes the stated business objectives and maintains industry standards compliance. The intent of "Best Value" procurement is to enable Vendors to offer and the Agency to select the most appropriate solution to meet the business objectives defined in the solicitation and to keep all parties focused on the desired outcome of a procurement.

A ranking method of source selection will be utilized in this procurement using evaluation criteria listed in order of importance in the Evaluation Criteria section below to allow the State to award this RFP to the Vendor(s) providing the Best Value and recognizing that Best Value may result in award other than the lowest price or highest technically qualified offer. By using this method, the overall ranking may be adjusted up or down when considered with, or traded-off against, other non-price factors.

EVALUTION METHOD: Narrative and by consensus of the evaluating committee, explaining the strengths and weaknesses of each proposal and why the recommended awardee(s) provide the best value to the State.

All qualified proposals will be evaluated, and award made based on considering the following criteria listed in descending order of importance, to result in an award most advantageous to the State:

1. Vendor Technical Approach (Section 5.4 Technical Approach)
2. Cost Proposal (Section 7.0 Attachment A)
3. Vendor Qualifications (Section 5.2 Tasks/Deliverables)
4. Vendor Experience (include references) (Section 4.4 Vendor Experience and Section 4.5 References)

3.5 PERFORMANCE OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES

Vendor shall complete ATTACHMENT F: LOCATION OF WORKERS UTILIZED BY VENDOR. In addition to any other evaluation criteria identified in this RFP, the State may also consider, for purposes of evaluating proposed or actual contract performance outside of the United States, how that performance may affect the following factors to ensure that any award will be in the best interest of the State:

- a) Total cost to the State
- b) Level of quality provided by the Vendor
- c) Process and performance capability across multiple jurisdictions
- d) Protection of the State's information and intellectual property
- e) Availability of pertinent skills
- f) Ability to understand the State's business requirements and internal operational culture
- g) Particular risk factors such as the security of the State's information technology
- h) Relations with citizens and employees
- i) Contract enforcement jurisdictional issues

3.6 INTERPRETATION OF TERMS AND PHRASES

This RFP serves two functions: (1) to advise potential Vendors of the parameters of the solution being sought by the State; and (2) to provide (together with other specified documents) the terms of the Contract resulting from this procurement. The use of phrases such as "shall," "must," and "requirements" are intended to create enforceable contract conditions. In determining whether proposals should be evaluated or rejected, the State will take into consideration the degree to which Vendors have proposed or failed to propose solutions that will satisfy the State's needs as described in the RFP. Except as specifically stated in the RFP, no one requirement shall automatically disqualify a Vendor from consideration. However, failure to comply with any single requirement may result in the State exercising its discretion to reject a proposal in its entirety.

4.0 REQUIREMENTS

This Section lists the requirements related to this RFP. By submitting a proposal, the Vendor agrees to meet all stated requirements in this Section as well as any other specifications, requirements, and terms and conditions stated in this RFP. If a Vendor is unclear about a requirement or specification, or believes a change to a requirement would allow for the State to receive a better proposal, the Vendor is urged to submit these items in the form of a question during the question-and-answer period in accordance with the Proposal Questions Section above.

4.1 PRICING

Proposal price shall constitute the total cost to the State for complete performance in accordance with the requirements and specifications herein, including all applicable charges for handling, transportation, administrative and other similar fees. Complete ATTACHMENT A: PRICING FORM and upload in the Sourcing Tool. The pricing provided in ATTACHMENT A, or resulting from any negotiations, is incorporated herein and shall become part of any resulting Contract.

INVOICES MAY NOT BE PAID UNTIL AN INSPECTION HAS OCCURRED AND THE GOODS OR SERVICES ACCEPTED.

4.1.1 Import Tariff Temporary Surcharge

Pricing shall be exclusive of any pending tariffs or temporary tariff surcharge. Vendor may request a temporary tariff surcharge in ATTACHMENT A: PRICING SUBMITTAL WORKBOOK as a charge separate from the contract price. Any temporary tariff surcharge(s) associated with purchases shall be provided by way of a percentage tariff surcharge. All tariff surcharges proposed are intended to be temporary and based on current tariff implications specific to related commodities with evidence of submitted documentation of affected MSRP products. Vendor understands that the agency may request additional justification. Any temporary tariff surcharge percentage will be negotiated and mutually agreed upon. The state is not obligated to accept any proposed import tariff surcharge. Proposed tariff surcharges may be used as a factor for evaluation and award.

4.2 FINANCIAL STABILITY

As a condition of contract award, the Vendor must certify that it has the financial capacity to perform and to continue to perform its obligations under the Contract; that Vendor has no constructive or actual knowledge of an actual or potential legal proceeding being brought against Vendor that could materially adversely affect performance of this Contract; and that entering into this Contract is not prohibited by any contract, or order by any court of competent jurisdiction.

Each Vendor shall certify it is financially stable by completing ATTACHMENT G: CERTIFICATION OF FINANCIAL CONDITION. The State is requiring this certification to minimize potential issues from contracting with a Vendor that is financially unstable. From the date of the Certification to the expiration of the Contract, the Vendor shall notify the State within thirty (30) days of any occurrence or condition that materially alters the truth of any statement made in this Certification. The Contract Manager may require annual recertification of the Vendor’s financial stability.

4.3 HUB PARTICIPATION

Pursuant to North Carolina General Statute G.S. 143-48, it is State policy to encourage and promote the use of small, minority, physically handicapped, and women contractors in purchasing Goods and Services. As such, this RFP will serve to identify those Vendors that are minority owned or have a strategic plan to support the State’s Historically Underutilized Business program by meeting or exceeding the goal of 10% utilization of diverse firms as 1st or 2nd tier subcontractors. Vendor shall complete ATTACHMENT D: HUB SUPPLEMENTAL VENDOR INFORMATION.

4.4 VENDOR EXPERIENCE

In its Proposal, Vendor shall demonstrate experience with public and/or private sector clients with similar or greater size and complexity to the State. Vendor shall provide information as to the qualifications and experience of all executive, managerial, legal, and professional personnel to be assigned to this project, including resumes citing experience with similar projects and the responsibilities to be assigned to each person.

4.5 REFERENCES

Vendor shall upload to the Sourcing Tool at least three (3) references, using ATTACHMENT E: CUSTOMER REFERENCE FORM, for which it has provided Services of similar size and scope to those proposed herein. References shall not be from the same company or from the solicitation State entity. In addition, Vendor shall provide references for and identify other government contracts it has received, for which your company has provided services of similar size and scope to those proposed herein. The State may contact these users to determine whether the Services provided are substantially similar in scope to those proposed herein and whether Vendor’s performance has been satisfactory. The information obtained may be considered in the evaluation of the Proposal.

4.6 PERSONNEL

Vendor warrants that qualified personnel shall provide Services under this Contract in a professional manner. “Professional manner” means that the personnel performing the Services will possess the skill and competence consistent with the prevailing business standards in the industry. Vendor will serve as the prime contractor under this Contract and shall be responsible for the performance and payment of all subcontractor(s) that may be approved by the State. Names of any third-party Vendors or subcontractors of Vendor may appear for purposes of convenience in Contract documents; and shall not limit Vendor’s obligations hereunder. Vendor will retain executive representation for functional and technical expertise as needed in order to incorporate any work by third party subcontractor(s).

Should the Vendor’s proposal result in an award, the Vendor shall be required to agree that it will not substitute key personnel assigned to the performance of the Contract without prior written approval by the Contract Lead. Vendor shall further agree that it will notify the Contract Lead of any desired substitution, including the name(s) and references of Vendor’s recommended substitute personnel. The State will approve or disapprove the requested substitution in a timely manner. The State may, in its sole discretion, terminate the Services of any person providing Services under this Contract. Upon such termination, the State may request acceptable substitute personnel or terminate the contract Services provided by such personnel.

4.7 VENDOR’S REPRESENTATIONS

If Vendor’s Proposal results in an award, Vendor agrees that it will not enter any agreement with a third party that may abridge any rights of the State under the Contract. If any Services, deliverables, functions, or responsibilities not specifically described in this solicitation are required for Vendor’s proper performance, provision and delivery of the Service and deliverables under a resulting Contract, or are an inherent part of or necessary sub-task included within such Service, they will be deemed to be implied by and included within the scope of the Contract to the same extent and in the same manner as if specifically described in the Contract. Unless otherwise expressly provided herein, Vendor will furnish all of its own necessary management, supervision, labor, facilities, furniture, computer and telecommunications equipment, software, supplies and materials necessary for the Vendor to provide and deliver the Services and/or other Deliverables.

4.8 SUBCONTRACTORS

No portion of the work shall be subcontracted without prior written consent of the State. In the event that the Vendor desires to subcontract some part of the work specified herein, the Vendor shall furnish with their bid the names, qualifications, and experience of their proposed subcontractors. The Vendor shall, however, remain solely and fully liable and responsible for the work done by its subcontractor(s) and shall assure compliance with all the requirements and specifications of the contract.

4.9 SECRETRY OF STATE REGISTRATION

Prior to entering into a contract with the State, the awarded Vendor(s) must complete registration with the NC Secretary of State. Upon notification of award, the selected Vendor(s) must furnish evidence of filing within 10 business days. Failure to provide this documentation may result in the disqualification of the Vendor(s) bid from further consideration for the award. No purchase orders shall be issued prior to confirmation of completed registration with the Secretary of State.

A contract award under the above-referenced solicitation, and the resulting purchase orders, will produce repeated orders and transactions in North Carolina and will constitute “transacting business” in the State, which requires a certificate of authority from the North Carolina Secretary of State as provided in G.S. §55-15-01 (corporations) or §57D-7-01 (LLCs). Please go to: <https://www.sosnc.gov/> to register.

Vendor registered with the North Carolina Secretary of State: Yes No

5.0 SPECIFICATIONS AND SCOPE OF WORK

The goal of this IFB is to select a qualified Vendor with proven experience in media buying, marketing and advertising to serve as the N.C. State Fair's "agency of record" to develop and execute as needed an integrated, multi-faceted marketing campaign promoting the annual N.C. State Fair each October.

It is anticipated that the bulk of the work that falls under this contract will be related to media buying. The chosen Vendor must be able to execute a media buy that targets specific audiences as determined by NCD&CS. The Vendor should have a strong understanding of North Carolina's demographics and media markets and experience in large-scale event industry communications and ticket sales.

5.1 GENERAL

The successful Vendor shall plan, coordinate and execute specific portions of the N.C. State Fair advertising campaign. The Vendor will work and interact with N.C. State Fair staff, partner organizations and other Vendors to provide full integration of advertising plans.

The Vendor should always strive to ensure the most effective use of limited resources, particularly in regard to paid media, which will encompass a significant amount of the selected Vendor's work. The Vendor is responsible for acquiring desirable time slots and media space for N.C. State Fair campaigns. Using market research information, such as demographics, media usage, ratings, click-through, impression and engagement rates, the Vendor must choose the best possible venue or medium for an advertising campaign as well as the most cost-effective. This will require the Vendor to keep abreast of industry figures, including distribution, reach and audience figures.

The Vendor must have established good relationships with advertising sales agents in North Carolina media markets to obtain the best prices and value for advertisement placements, campaigns, or even media bundles. They should continue to develop those relationships with media companies and forge new ones to continue to provide the N.C. State Fair with the best advertising opportunities.

The Vendor must also monitor the purchased media to make sure the advertisements appear as planned, as make-good offers are not acceptable if they occur after the dates of the annual N.C. State Fair.

The Vendor may be asked to attend in-person meetings on site in Raleigh, N.C.

5.2 TASK/DELIVERABLES

The qualified Vendor must be able to provide the following as needed and directed by NCDA&CS.

Development of Marketing and Advertising Plans Including Research and Focus Group Testing

- Provide market research, marketing concepts, focus group testing (if needed), current and future user demographic information, and user language preference data to help prepare a plan.
- Collect, analyze and interpret research data for selected target audiences, including but not necessarily limited to: demographic, socioeconomic, psychographic and lifestyle information. Analysis of target audience data should facilitate audience segmentation and contribute to an understanding of relevant behavioral determinants.
- The Vendor must have a demonstrated capacity for the execution of research methods such as (but not necessarily limited to) surveys, focus groups, intercept interviews, etc. if needed.
- Present plans and obtain approvals for plans from Contract Administrator and/or their designee.

Creative Task Flow and Distribution

- NCDA&CS has an in-house team of talented graphic designers who will provide all creativity for the marketing campaign. Vendor shall work with the Contract Administrator to provide all graphic needs of the campaign in a timely manner for production.
- Develop and present plans for a fully integrated marketing campaign, with tactics including but not limited to: printed materials, videos, TV and/or radio, digital display, paid social media content, transit and out-of-home.
- The Contract Administrator and/or her designee must approve all creative work done by the Vendor or subcontractors that is not completed by the in-house NCDA&CS team.
- Vendor will meet all deadlines for distribution of content under its responsibility.

Media Buying

- Analyze and recommend specific paid marketing mediums that most effectively communicate the message to the designated audience.
- Research media channels and placement opportunities, including media usage, ratings and the strength of each media channel, and make recommendations for placements that:
 - fall within budget constraints.
 - Are primarily targeted at residents of North Carolina that fall within the designated demographic and geographic audience of a campaign; and
 - would be timed well to reach the target audience.
- In developing media buying plans, ensure the most effective use of limited resources. Aim to reach the highest number of people within the assigned budget, always seeking to ensure the N.C. State Fair receives the greatest value possible for its spending and is a good steward of its resources.

- Work with media sales representatives employed by newspapers, magazines, cable services, digital and social media companies, and radio and television stations. Negotiate contracts with various media outlets. Negotiate all rates, special placement and added value by medium for each campaign. Document all negotiations.
- Present and gain approval for media plans from the Contract Administrator and/or her designee.
- Produce a work schedule that indicates dates for the milestone delivery as well as expectations for client approvals of plans.
- Maintain all media buys and be responsible for the post-buy results of all buys.
- Follow the Department's purchasing process to ensure invoices are properly submitted and media companies and their representatives are paid on time.
- Monitor placement on behalf of the N.C. State Fair to ensure advertisements appear as planned and the completion of all paid and unpaid media schedules. Credit or bill clients as necessary to settle accounts.

Reporting

- Track and report on success/impact of campaigns using industry standard evaluation metrics.
- Monitor and optimize effectiveness of campaigns.
- Provide updates on the performance of all media suppliers' activities to ensure that a) all services purchased are delivered and b) actual performance meets or exceeds the industry standard for that medium. Weekly progress updates on all metrics of the campaign are required.

5.3 PROJECT ORGANIZATION

Vendor shall describe the organizational and operational structure it proposes to utilize for the work described in this RFP and identify the responsibilities to be assigned to each person Vendor proposes to staff the work.

5.4 TECHNICAL APPROACH

Vendor must have experience and resources to effectively manage and execute the media planning and buying of a marketing program. In addition, the Vendor must have a comprehensive understanding of the large-scale events industry, processes and organizations in NC or other states with similar events. The Vendor proposal must include:

A narrative, outline, and/or graph of the Vendor's approach to accomplishing the tasks outlined in the Scope of Work section of this RFP. The project management approach and a description of how the Vendor could accomplish providing each of the four overarching tasks outlined in Section 5.2 and the schedule for accomplishing each shall be included.

- i. Vendors must submit three (3) samples of media plans that reflect its capability to provide strategic media buying services.
- ii. Samples of work completed for large-scale events are preferred. Specify any languages other than English used and identify organizations consulted and/or subcontracted for this work. The Vendor's explanation should include the protocol used for focus group testing of concepts, if any.
- iii. Vendors without a large-scale event campaign may submit samples used for a different type of media campaign but should provide an explanation in writing as to how it would approach the development of a large-scale event campaign. The Vendor's explanation should include the protocol used for focus group testing of concepts, if any.

5.5 CERTIFICATION AND SAFETY LABELS

Any manufactured items and/or fabricated assemblies provided hereunder that are subject to operation under pressure, operation by connection to an electric source, or operation involving a connection to a manufactured, natural, or LP gas source shall be constructed and approved in a manner acceptable to the appropriate inspector which customarily requires the label or re-examination listing or identification marking of the appropriate safety standard organization *acceptable to govern inspection where the item is to be located*, such as the American Society of Mechanical Engineers for pressure vessels; the Underwriters Laboratories and /or National Electrical Manufacturers' Association for electrically operated assemblies; or the American Gas Association for gas operated assemblies, where such approvals of listings have been established for the type of device offered and furnished. Further, all items furnished shall meet all requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), and state and federal requirements relating to clean air and water pollution.

6.0 CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION

All Contract Administration requirements are conditioned on an award resulting from this solicitation. This information is provided for the Vendor’s planning purposes.

6.1 CONTRACT MANAGER AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

The Vendor shall be required to designate and make available to the State a contract manager. The contract manager shall be the State’s point of contact for Contract related issues and issues concerning performance, progress review, scheduling, and service.

| Contract Manager Point of Contact | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Name: | |
| Office Phone #: | |
| Mobile Phone #: | |
| Email: | |

The Vendor shall be required to designate and make available to the State for customer service. The customer service point of contact shall be the State’s point of contact for customer service-related issues (define roles and responsibilities).

| Customer Service Point of Contact | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Name: | |
| Office Phone #: | |
| Mobile Phone #: | |
| Email: | |

6.2 INVOICES

Vendor shall invoice the Procurement Entity. The standard format for invoicing shall be Single Invoices meaning that the Vendor shall provide the Procurement Entity with an invoice for each order. Invoices shall include detailed information to allow Procurement Entity to verify pricing at point of receipt matches the correct price from the original date of order. The following fields shall be included on all invoices, as relevant:

Vendor’s Billing Address, Customer Account Number, NC Contract Number, Order Date, Buyer’s Order Number, Manufacturer Part Numbers, Vendor Part Numbers, Item Descriptions, Price, Quantity, and Unit of Measure.

INVOICES MAY NOT BE PAID UNTIL AN INSPECTION HAS OCCURRED AND THE GOODS OR SERVICES ACCEPTED.

6.3 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The State encourages the Vendor to identify opportunities to reduce the total cost the State. A continuous improvement effort consists of various ways to enhance business efficiencies as performance progresses.

6.4 ACCEPTANCE OF WORK

Performance of the work and/or delivery of Goods shall be conducted and completed at least in accordance with the Contract requirements and recognized and customarily accepted industry practices. Performance shall be considered complete when the

Services or Goods are approved as acceptable by the Contract Manager.

The State shall have the obligation to notify Vendor, in writing ten (10) calendar days following completion of such work or delivery of a deliverable described in the Contract that it is not acceptable. The notice shall specify in reasonable detail the reason(s) it is unacceptable. Acceptance by the State shall not be unreasonably withheld; but may be conditioned or delayed as required for reasonable review, evaluation, installation, or testing, as applicable to the work or deliverable. Final acceptance is expressly conditioned upon completion of all applicable assessment procedures. Should the work or deliverables fail to meet any specifications, acceptance criteria or otherwise fail to conform to the Contract, the State may exercise any and all rights hereunder, including, for Goods deliverables, such rights provided by the Uniform Commercial Code, as adopted in North Carolina.

6.5 DISPUTE RESOLUTION

During the performance of the Contract, the parties agree that it is in their mutual interest to resolve disputes informally. Any claims by the Vendor shall be submitted in writing to the State’s Contract Manager for resolution. Any claims by the State shall be submitted in writing to the Vendor’s Project Manager for resolution. The Parties shall agree to negotiate in good faith and use all reasonable efforts to resolve such dispute(s).

During the time the Parties are attempting to resolve any dispute, each shall proceed diligently to perform their respective duties and responsibilities under this Contract. The Parties will agree on a reasonable amount of time to resolve a dispute. If a dispute cannot be resolved between the Parties within the agreed upon period, either Party may elect to exercise any other remedies available under the Contract, or at law. This provision, when agreed in the Contract, shall not constitute an agreement by either party to mediate or arbitrate any dispute.

6.6 CONTRACT CHANGES

Contract changes, if any, over the life of the Contract shall be implemented by contract amendments agreed to in writing by the State and Vendor. Amendments to the contract can only be through the contract administrator.

6.7 ATTACHMENTS

All attachments to this RFP are the copies found within the Ariba Sourcing Tool, and are incorporated herein, and shall be submitted by responding in the Sourcing Tool.

THE REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

7.0 ATTACHMENT A: PRICING FORM

CASE SCENARIO

For evaluation purposes only, the Vendor must describe a plan of how they would approach the scenario listed below and provide an itemized list of deliverables.

Vendors shall include, in a narrative, outline and/or presentation form, a campaign idea to assist the N.C. State Fair in increasing sales during the pre-fair advance sales period. The Vendor should explain in 10 pages/slides or less who the target audience is and how the campaign will connect with the audience to produce an increase in sales.

Scenario:

The N.C. State Fair Advance Sales Team requests the creation of a campaign component to increase pre-fair sales among North Carolinians with families of children aged 5-10 of all ethnicities, targeting the female decision-makers. The N.C. State Fair would like this component of the overall marketing campaign to be placed on TV, radio, digital and/or social media. A Spanish language component of the campaign is requested for a medium that would best connect with that demographic.

Please include a budget itemization that fits within the overall campaign budget for the 2024 N.C. State Fair and is actionable. This budget should not expend the totality of the budget.

COST PROPOSAL FOR COMPREHENSIVE N.C. STATE FAIR MARKETING CAMPAIGN

The amount budgeted for this contract period is \$445,000.00. The N.C. State Fair will not consider any response with a price above \$455,000.00 and is seeking to maximize the quality and attractiveness of media placement available within this budget.

Vendor's response shall include an itemized cost table of Vendor's approach to Section 5.0. Scope of Work.

1. **Net Media Cost:** \$ _____
Dollar amount allocated to paid media companies at negotiated rates

2. **Development of Marketing and Advertising Plans, Media Buying and Reporting:** \$ _____
Agency fees

Total Bid Price (Firm cost taken from LINES 1-2 above): \$445,000.00